

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An information reproduction system comprising:

an information reproduction apparatus which generates an  
5 audio signal from audio information and outputting the audio  
signal;

an output apparatus which outputs the audio signal output  
from the information reproduction apparatus, to output lines;  
and

10 an output control apparatus which controls output of the  
audio signal in the output apparatus to the output lines,  
wherein

the output control apparatus comprises:

a storage device which stores output control information  
15 in order to control output of the audio signal in the output  
apparatus to the output lines;

a control device which controls the output apparatus based  
on the output control information stored by the storage device;  
and

20 a transmitter device which transmits the output control  
information stored by the storage device to outside, and

the information reproduction apparatus comprises:

a receiver device which receives the output control  
information transmitted from the output control apparatus;

25 an output channel determination device which determines  
output channels for the audio signal based on the output control  
information received by the receiver device;

an information acquisition device which acquires the audio information;

a signal generation device which generates an audio signal corresponding to the output channels determined by the output channel determination device, from the audio information acquired by the information acquisition device; and

a signal output device which outputs the audio signal generated by the signal generation device.

2. The information reproduction system according to claim 1, wherein

the output control information contains speaker connection information which indicates whether speakers are connected to the output line of the output apparatus, and

in the information reproduction apparatus, the output channel determination device decides whether speakers are connected to the output lines, based on the speaker connection information contained in the output control information, and determines output channels for the audio signal based on a result of the decision.

3. The information reproduction system according to claim 1, wherein the information reproduction apparatus further comprises a request device which requests the output control apparatus to transmit the output control information.

4. The information reproduction system according to claim

1, wherein

the information reproduction apparatus and the output control apparatus are connected to each other via a bus,

the transmitter device in the output control apparatus  
5 transmits the output control information via the bus, and

the receiver device in the information reproduction apparatus receives the output control information via the bus.

5. The information reproduction system according to claim

10 1, wherein

the audio information contains audio substance information which is information concerning audio itself, and output channel indication information which indicates output channels for an audio signal generated from the audio substance information,

15 the signal generation device in the information reproduction apparatus comprises:

a decision device which compares the output channels indicated by the output channel indication information contained in the audio information acquired by the information acquisition  
20 device, with the output channels determined by the output channel determination device, and conducts conformity decision processing to decide whether those output channels conform to each other; and

a synthesis device, responsive to nonconformity of the  
25 output channels indicated by the output channel indication information to the output channels determined by the output channel determination device in a result of a decision effected

by the decision device, which conducts signal synthesis processing in order to make the output channels for an audio signal conform to each other, in generating the audio signal from the audio substance information contained in the audio information.

6. The information reproduction system according to claim 5, wherein

the audio information is divided into audio information units, and the audio information contains output channel indication information in order to indicate output channels for each of the audio information units, and

the signal generation device in the information reproduction apparatus conducts the conformity decision processing and the signal synthesis processing, based on output channel indication information corresponding to each of the audio information units, whenever reproducing the audio information units.

7. The information reproduction system according to claim 5, wherein

the audio information contains synthesis processing permission/prohibition information for indicating whether the signal synthesis processing is permitted or prohibited, and

the signal generation device in the information reproduction apparatus decides whether the signal synthesis processing is permitted, based on synthesis processing

permission/prohibition information contained in the audio information that has been acquired by the information acquisition device, and conducts the signal synthesis processing only when the signal synthesis processing is permitted as a result of the  
5 decision.

8. An information reproduction apparatus for generating an audio signal from audio information and outputting the audio signal, the information reproduction apparatus comprising:

10 a receiver device which receives output control information from another device that holds the output control information for controlling output of the audio signal output from the information reproduction apparatus to output lines;

an output channel determination device which determines  
15 output channels for the audio signal based on the output control information received by the receiver device;

an information acquisition device which acquires the audio information;

a signal generation device which generates an audio signal  
20 corresponding to the output channels determined by the output channel determination device, from the audio information acquired by the information acquisition device; and

a signal output device which outputs the audio signal generated by the signal generation device.

25  
9. The information reproduction apparatus according to claim 8, wherein

the output control information contains speaker connection information which indicates whether speakers are connected to the output lines of the output apparatus, and

the output channel determination device decides whether  
5 speakers are connected to the output lines, based on the speaker connection information contained in the output control information, and determines output channels for the audio signal based on a result of the decision.

10 10. The information reproduction apparatus according to claim 8, further comprising a request device which requests the output control information holding device to transmit the output control information.

15 11. The information reproduction apparatus according to claim 8, wherein the receiver device receives the output control information via a bus.

12. The information reproduction apparatus according to claim  
20 8, wherein

the audio information contains audio substance information which is information concerning audio itself, and output channel indication information which indicates output channels for an audio signal generated from the audio substance information,

25 the signal generation device comprises:

a decision device which compares the output channels indicated by the output channel indication information contained

in the audio information acquired by the information acquisition device, with the output channels determined by the output channel determination device, and conducts conformity decision processing to decide whether those output channels conform to each other; and

a synthesis device, responsive to nonconformity of the output channels indicated by the output channel indication information to the output channels determined by the output channel determination device in a result of a decision effected by the decision device, which conducts signal synthesis processing in order to make the output channels for an audio signal conform to each other, in generating the audio signal from the audio substance information contained in the audio information.

13. The information reproduction apparatus according to claim 12, wherein

the audio information is divided into audio information units, and the audio information contains output channel indication information in order to indicate output channels for each of the audio information units, and

the signal generation device conducts the conformity decision processing and the signal synthesis processing, based on output channel indication information corresponding to each of the audio information units, whenever reproducing the audio information units.

14. The information reproduction apparatus according to claim 12, wherein

the audio information contains synthesis processing permission/prohibition information for indicating whether the signal synthesis processing is permitted or prohibited, and

the signal generation device decides whether the signal synthesis processing is permitted, based on synthesis processing permission/prohibition information contained in the audio information that has been acquired by the information acquisition device, and conducts the signal synthesis processing only when the signal synthesis processing is permitted as a result of the decision.

15. A computer program embodied in a memory medium, which can be read by a computer in an information reproduction apparatus for generating an audio signal from audio information and outputting the audio signal, the computer program causing the computer to function as:

a receiver device which receives output control information from another device that holds the output control information for controlling output of the audio signal output from the information reproduction apparatus to output lines;

an output channel determination device which determines output channels for the audio signal based on the output control information received by the receiver device;

an information acquisition device which acquires the audio information;



a signal generation device which generates an audio signal corresponding to the output channels determined by the output channel determination device, from the audio information acquired by the information acquisition device; and

5        a signal output device which outputs the audio signal generated by the signal generation device.

16.    An information reproduction method for an information reproduction system, the information reproduction system  
10    including an information reproduction apparatus for generating an audio signal from audio information and outputting the audio signal, an output apparatus for outputting the audio signal output from the information reproduction apparatus, to output lines, and an output control apparatus for storing output control  
15    information in order to control output of the audio signal in the output apparatus to the output lines, and controlling the output apparatus based on the output control information, the information reproduction method comprising:

      a communication process for transmitting the output  
20    control information from the output control apparatus and receiving the output control information in the information reproduction apparatus;

      an output channel determination process conducted in the information reproduction apparatus to determine output channels  
25    for the audio signal based on the output control information received in the communication process;

      an information acquisition process conducted in the

information reproduction apparatus to acquire the audio information;

a signal generation process conducted in the information reproduction apparatus to generate an audio signal corresponding  
5 to the output channels determined in the output channel determination process, from the audio information acquired in the information acquisition process; and

a signal output process conducted in the information reproduction apparatus to output the audio signal generated in  
10 the signal generation process.